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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 003559

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [KS](#) [KN](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES UNSCR 1718

REF: STATE 172816

Classified By: DCM Bill Stanton. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) On October 16, the DCM presented reftel points on UNSCR 1718 to Park In-kook, Deputy Foreign Minister for Policy Planning and Public Affairs, urging that South Korea, along with other countries, come up with concrete steps to implement the resolution. Park said the ROKG welcomed UNSCR 1718 and would adhere to it, but Seoul was eager to hear more specificity on what the resolution required, noting for example some of the language was vague on concepts like "luxury" goods. He added that the ROKG had conducted a four-hour inter-agency meeting the previous day and decided that UNSCR 1718 did not directly apply to the ROK's two main economic projects in North Korea: the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Mt. Kumgang tourism project. The DCM responded "luxury" goods need not be so difficult to define as evidenced by the ROK's own import regulations that levied higher tariffs on luxury automobiles. He also questioned the value of keeping the Mt. Kumgang tourism resort open. Countries now had the opportunity to find ways to implement UNSCR 1718 to send a clear message to North Korea that its actions were unacceptable. END SUMMARY.

ROKG: UNSCR IMPLEMENTATION COMPLICATED BY DETAILS

¶2. (C) During an October 16 meeting with Park In-kook, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and Public Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the DCM delivered reftel points encouraging Seoul to consider ways to implement UNSCR 1718. After carefully reviewing the points, Park said that Seoul welcomed UNSCR 1718. UNSC approval of the resolution in less than a week was impressive. One merit of the resolution was the high moral standard of the resolution's language calling for sanctions. One of the demerits, he added, was that it lacked the specificity to allow quick implementation. More efforts were needed to fill in the details of what the resolution actually required.

¶3. (C) Park continued that, for example, section 8(d) of the resolution called on member states to freeze funds or financial assets controlled by persons or entities designated by the Sanctions Committee or Security Council. The ROKG needed to wait to find out who these persons or entities were

designated to be. Similarly, section 8(e) authorized travel bans on persons likewise designated. Park understood that an earlier draft of the resolution had language that such designations would be conducted by "relevant national authorities" but during UNSC deliberations the language had been modified. Other examples of unclear language, Park said, included the definition of "luxury" goods. It would have been better if UNSCR 1718 included fewer vague terms to allow for more efficient implementation.

¶4. (C) The DCM responded that as a sovereign country the ROK had the opportunity to decide how to implement UNSCR 1718 and respond to the North Korean nuclear test. It was not that difficult, however, to give meaning to the spirit of UNSCR 1718. Moreover, trade with the DPRK was so small for most countries, it should not be hard to identify what goods should be considered luxury items. It was not right that the DPRK continued to import luxury goods and continued to develop nuclear weapons while it also continued to receive humanitarian aid from donor countries to feed its citizens. The DCM noted that ROKG officials had already worked out for their own domestic purposes tariff rates on "luxury" imported automobiles or imported liquors, so it was not unreasonable to apply a similar standard to goods destined for North Korea.

ROKG: WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO?

¶5. (C) Park said that the ROKG was aware of an earlier U.S. Executive Order that had targeted 12 companies and 1 person for evidence of involvement in WMD-related activities, but even these entities were not mentioned in the UN resolution. Park asked if the USG was requesting in this demarche any specific actions to be taken, for example, against any known DPRK funds or financial assets in South Korea or specific persons or entities. He stated that the previous day, following a four-hour inter-agency meeting, he had given a background briefing to ROK media and conveyed the ROKG view that UNSCR 1718 did not apply to the Kaesong Industrial Complex or the Mt. Kumgang tourism project, as long as the projects were not clearly linked to DPRK WMD efforts. He asked if the USG shared this view with the ROKG.

¶6. (C) The DCM reiterated that the demarche intended to ask capitals how they planned to implement UNSCR 1718 and to solicit their suggestions for cooperation. Noting that while he had no specific guidance about the applicability of UNSCR 1718 to Kaesong and Kumgang, he personally questioned the Kumgang project, more so than the Kaesong Industrial Complex. The logic behind the KIC was that through continued interaction between North Korean workers and South Korean managers the ROK would be able to expose the North to South Korea and help to promote economic change and openness. The Kumgang tourism project, however, accomplished nothing of that sort. Most of the workers were ethnic Koreans from China, and the DPRK had taken extreme measures to prevent contact between North Koreans and ROK or international tourists at Kumgang. The site was of understandable cultural importance for ROK visitors, but did the benefit justify the cost of \$20 million in annual fees that the DPRK got to spend however it wanted? Again, personally speaking, he wondered why the tourism project had not been touched after the North Korean missile launches and apparent nuclear test. Park had no specific response to these points but mentioned that the ROK Unification Ministry made the case that the per person fees for visiting Mt. Kumgang were roughly equivalent to visa fees that most countries charged for tourists.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Deputy Minister Park's deliberate presentation of the perceived difficulties of implementing UNSCR 1718 underlies ROKG unwillingness, at this time, to take a tougher approach to North Korea. Despite initial ROKG statements that the ROK would need to reexamine its engagement policy following a nuclear test, the ROKG so far seems to be focusing only on what it is required to do to meet international obligations

rather than what more it could do in the spirit of UNSCR
¶1718. END COMMENT.
VERSHBOW